

MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

August 12, 1999  
MAG Office  
302 North First Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Debbie Kohn, Avondale, Chairperson	Jim Hull, Mesa
Betsy Wise, Carefree	Duncan Miller, Paradise Valley
*Sondra Finkbeiner, Cave Creek	Ralph Spencer for Sandy Teetsel, Peoria
Jim Holmes for Bill Mitchell, Chandler	Jim Wortham for Greg Binder, Phoenix
Peter Putterman, Fountain Hills	Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh, Scottsdale
Shawn Woolley, Gilbert	John Laue, Tempe
*Doug Sandstrom, Gila Bend	Reyes Medranos for Ralph Velez, Tolleson
*Steven Jones, Glendale	Sabra Mousavi, ADOT
Layne Sutton for Jack Blonski, Goodyear	Eddie Caine, RPTA
*Horatio Skeete, Litchfield Park	
*Cary Parker, Maricopa County	

\*Members neither present nor represented by proxy

OTHERS PRESENT

Rosa Herrara, El Mirage	Tom Barr, Norstan
Mark Goldstein, IRC	Glenn Stoneman, Norstan
Harry Wolfe, MAG	Randi Alcott, RPTA
Heidi Pahl, MAG	Ron Beck, Scottsdale
Rita Walton, MAG	David Deans, US West
Jenny Shepherd, Mesa	Dick Gregory, Youngtown

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Debbie Kohn. Tom Barr participated in the meeting by telephone.

2. Approval of July 22, 1999 Meeting Minutes

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh requested that the minutes be amended to note that the meeting adjourned prematurely due to parking garage capacity demands. Eddie Caine requested that the Telecommuting Program portion of the minutes be amended to indicate that Governor Hull is planning to invite the highest ranking officials in the program to a "Thank You Breakfast" on October 7, 1999. It was moved by Peter

Putterman, seconded by John Laue and unanimously recommended to approve the July 22, 1999 meeting minutes as amended.

3. Educational Topics

The educational session on the future of videoconferencing technology was postponed due to the high importance of other agenda items.

4. Videoconferencing Forum

Debbie Kohn announced that the Videoconferencing Forum held on August 9, 1999 at Arizona State University in Tempe was a great success. Ms. Kohn noted that there were four panelists: Bill Albee, University of Nevada, Dr. Ronald Weinstein, University of Arizona, Susan Morley, Northern Arizona Regional Behavioral Health Authority (NARBHA), and Brad Hartig, City of Scottsdale. These panelists provided invaluable input on their organization and its videoconferencing system, how they selected their videoconferencing equipment, network and bridge, their experiences with implementation, and lessons learned. Heidi Pahl announced that the Forum was videotaped and to contact Heidi to obtain a copy.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh said that comments made at the Videoconferencing Forum affirmed some of her opinions that the technology is similar, but that one needs to become accustomed to the user interface. It is also important not to set very high expectations in the first year for videoconferencing.

Peter Putterman commented that he would have liked to hear from panelists who had a dial-up network rather than a dedicated network.

Eddie Caine asked if anyone at the forum described trip reduction benefits from videoconferencing. Debbie Kohn stated that NARBHA saved 3,500 staff hours in the first year of videoconferencing.

Rita Walton mentioned that the panelists stated that it is important for the videoconferencing project to have a champion, that success is not immediate and that word of mouth is an excellent method to increase usage of videoconferencing.

Heidi Pahl reported that five Videoconferencing Forum questionnaires were received and that she would compile the results of the questionnaire.

5. Videoconferencing Project

Debbie Kohn gave an update on the MAG Videoconferencing Project. Rita Walton distributed draft videoconferencing recommendations and equipment comparisons. Ms. Kohn reviewed the equipment, network, multi-point control server (MCS) and audio components of the recommendations made by the Videoconferencing Review Group. Ms. Kohn stated that it was recommended that everyone receive an essential videoconferencing system using VTEL equipment. She stated it was recommended that the network be ISDN BRI at all member agency sites and ISDN PRI or better at the hub or MAG site, that we purchase a 27 port video MCS, and a 48 port audio conferencing server.

Rita Walton noted that it is in the best interest of the project to purchase a continuous presence component with the video MCS. Glenn Stoneman stated that the MCS recommendation should include a “collaborates” component to allow sites to maintain bandwidth despite potential connection issues at other sites.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh asked if during a videoconference, the video call was dropped would the meeting become an audio conference. Glenn Stoneman responded that the video call would end and that participants would have to call in to join an audio conference.

Heidi Pahl explained the equipment comparisons table noting that the recommendation is to move forward with the VTEL TC 1000 Model 50, at a minimum. Peter Putterman stated that this model was recommended by the Videoconferencing Review Group. Betsy Wise asked what the differences are between VTEL TC 1000 Model 30 and Model 50. Heidi Pahl explained that there are five differences between the two models: the Model 50 is \$6000 more in price because it has better audio, pen pal graphics, wireless keyboard and more video and audio inputs and outputs. The Model 50 is more ungradable than the Model 30 and scalability was crucial to member agencies. Duncan Miller asked if the Model 50 is on a roll-about cart. Heidi Pahl responded yes.

Mark Goldstein asked if the prices on the equipment comparisons table were list price. Heidi Pahl answered that they are suggested retail price. Rita Walton added that a discount has been applied to the list price of equipment and MCS. She also mentioned that according to draft calculations we are approximately \$490,000 above budget but that MAG Management has stated that we are confident that federal funding could be available at the closeout of the next federal fiscal year, 1999-2000.

Jim Hull asked if there is not enough money will any costs fall back on the cities. Rita Walton said that the cities would not incur the additional costs for the first year of operations.

It was moved by Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh and seconded by Peter Putterman to approve the MAG Videoconferencing Project recommendation, for the end sites and the hub site. VTEL equipment and ISDN BRI were recommended at the end sites and VTEL equipment, ISDN PRI or better, a 27 port video MCS, and a 48 port audio conferencing server was recommended for the hub site. The motion was passed unanimously and with great enthusiasm.

## 6. Telecommuting Program

Eddie Caine gave a brief update on the Telecommuting Program. Mr. Caine said that he received few comments on the Telecommuting Survey. He asked if anyone had comments on the survey. Debbie Kohn suggested that “telework” be defined. Mark Goldstein suggested that questions 26 and 27 be the same format as question five so that percentages can be calculated.

Betsy Wise asked how telecommuting is defined. Eddie Caine responded that if a trip is saved when working from home instead of driving into work it is telecommuting.

Eddie Caine said that he would email Heidi Pahl the revised survey so that she could email or mail it to all member agencies. Eddie Caine said that he would like completed surveys returned to him a week prior to the next MAGTAG meeting so that he could report on the results at the next meeting.

7. Update on Small Town Connections

Heidi Pahl stated that she has not yet conducted the Electronic Access Survey but that she would have an update by next MAGTAG meeting.

8. TIP Process and Stakeholders Meeting

Rita Walton gave an update on the TIP process and Stakeholders meeting. Ms. Walton reported that the Videoconferencing Forum constituted a Stakeholders meeting for public comment on videoconferencing.

Rita Walton also mentioned that as part of the TIP process MAG committee members are charged with providing input on the federally funded projects like the Videoconferencing Project. This year input is requested primarily for 2003-2005. Ms. Walton proposed including the projects put forward last year for 2003 and 2004, reintroducing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year operating costs for the Regional Videoconferencing System and adding a Regional Wide Area Network (WAN). She mentioned that some Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects are already in the TIP to lay fiber optics between operating centers and it might be advantageous to partner with the ITS Committee.

Jim Holmes asked if the fiber mentioned would be new fiber or existing fiber that MAG could build onto. He asked if MAG had a concept for the regional WAN. Ms. Walton responded that the ITS committee is laying fiber to reduce long term costs and increase connectivity. Along the same lines, Ms. Walton said that MAG wants to decrease annual operating costs for videoconferencing for MAG member agencies. She reported that she would appreciate input from MAGTAG on this issue.

Jim Hull stated that he thinks it is a good idea to plan for future years operating costs now. Mr. Hull noted that MAG needs to identify needs for video, ITS, phone system etc. in order to justify large amounts of bandwidth. He suggested that MAGTAG could look at the business issues that they would be dealing with in five years, instead of specifically looking at designing and installing a regional WAN.

Peter Putterman stated that in five years there will be a lot more infrastructure.

Debbie Kohn suggested meeting with the Chair of the ITS Committee prior to the next MAGTAG meeting, as he might be interested in making this a MAGTAG / ITS joint project.

9. Public Input

There was no public input.

10. Announcements

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh stated that more marketing is needed for Scottsdale's videoconferencing system. She announced that there is a meeting Thursday August 19, 1999 on policy issues to discuss RCN as a new open system provider regulated by the Federal Corporation Commission (FCC). Ms. Oman-Saltmarsh announced that the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) is having a conference September 15-18, 1999 that she will be attending. Debbie Kohn indicated that she will also attend the conference.

Shawn Woolley announced that US West is conducting a pilot program of local telephone service in Gilbert and they are rapidly deploying infrastructure.

Mark Goldstein announced that the next Arizona Telecommunications & Information Council (ATIC) meeting is September 9, 1999. He also announced that the Arizona League of Cities and Towns is having their annual conference in Oro Valley, September 7-10, 1999. Debbie Kohn added that there will be a seminar on Internet taxation at this conference.

11. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the MAGTAG will be held on Thursday September 23, 1999 at the MAG Office Building. The remainder of meetings for 1999 are as follows:

October 28, 1999

December 9, 1999

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.